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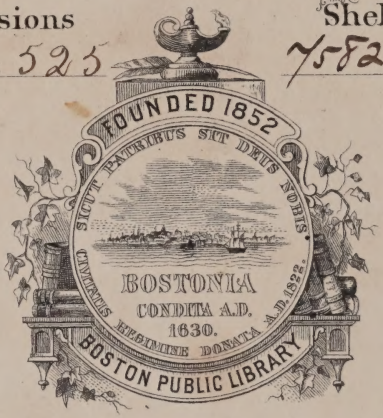

Received Apr. 23, 1889.

THE

LIBERIAN REPUBLIC

AS IT IS.

BY

GEORGE R. STETSON,

BOSTON.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY A. WILLIAMS & CO.,
283 WASHINGTON STREET,
1881.

Single copies, ten cents. Six dollars per hundred.

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NOTE.

The greater part of this pamphlet originally appeared as an article on Liberia, in the *New York Herald* December 24, 1880.

The article is reprinted in this form, with some additional details, at the request of gentlemen, who, having an intimate acquaintance with the present condition of the colored people, both here and in Liberia, think the time has come when the interests of that people demand that emigration to the African Coast, excepting for those already prepared, or intending to be there prepared, by training and education to take part in the work of evangelization, should be publicly discouraged.

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WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

What is the truth? is a question usually more easily asked than answered. In the case before us, however, the difficulty lies not so much in making an intelligible and exact answer as in making an agreeable and satisfactory one to the friends of African colonization.

At irregular periods we see in the newspapers, statements of facts unfavorable to the Republic of Liberia as a field for emigration; and as frequently as these statements appear they are denied, either by some over-zealous friend, or by the officials of the American Colonization Society. The result is, of course, extremely confusing to the public mind; and the casual reader who has no particular interest in the subject, and does not investigate for himself, has either no opinion at all, or, if any, an erroneous one.

Fortunately the facts are at hand, easily accessible to all who care to know them, and furnished abundantly by friends and foes; to these facts I propose to appeal for an exact understanding of the present condition and future prospects of the Republic of Liberia.

In the statements made, and circulars sent out by those interested in stimulating emigration, as well as in the public addresses, a part of the truth is only told. The luxuriance of vegetation, the fertility and adaptability of the soil to the purposes of cultivation, the climate of perpetual summer, the political and social independence to be enjoyed under a government framed by the negro, for the negro, and a constitution which, by disfranchising the white man, forever protects the negro from that bar to his progress in his path of destiny and enables him to work out the salvation of his race untrammelled by foreign influence: these advantages are portrayed in such colors as the imagination of the writer or speaker can command. It is the truth; but not the whole truth.

Rev. C. W. Thomas has well said, referring to the results of colonization in Africa:—"We would not be understood as attributing any unworthy motive to the zealous friends of the Americo-African in Liberia: they are noble and liberal men; but we wish to intimate that, in looking at and describing the condition of their long cherished scheme, their desires too often color their statements."*

It is not my purpose to cast reproach upon any who have been, or who are now connected with schemes for the colonization of Liberia, or to reflect upon the purity of their motives.

We have only to deal with results.

The objects and motives of the society above referred to, are pure and exalted; but the fruits of their enterprise are bitter and disappointing.

Knowing the character of the gentlemen forming that society, it would be a libel to assert that it is their purpose to deceive the ignorant field hands of our southern plantations, who are occasionally reported in the newspapers, as clamoring for the means and opportunity to emigrate.

It is then but simple charity to suppose, as Rev. Mr. Thomas suggests, that their zeal in promoting the colonization of Liberia, without a proper consideration of the untold privation and suffering it frequently brings to the individual, is blind; and outruns their prudence and discretion.

It is also due to the writer, to disclaim any interest whatsoever in this subject, except that which the common principle of our humanity urges.

The narrow limit allowed to me here will only permit a brief recital of facts, but it may be sufficient to show that emigration to Liberia has its shadow as well as sun.

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*Rev. C. W. Thomas, M. A., "West Coast of Africa."

THE CLIMATE OF LIBERIA.

The Republic of Liberia occupies the Grain, or Pepper coast of Northern Guinea, in the Torrid Zone, on the west coast of Africa, between the (4th) fourth and (9th) ninth parallels of north latitude. Its climate is equatorial and divided into two seasons, the wet and dry, or, as they are called by the natives, the "rains" and "dries." These seasons are not, of course exactly defined, and rain occurs in both seasons, but more continuously in the wet. The rainy season may be said to begin in the middle of May ; the dry season in the middle of November. The "Harmattan" season is in December and January; the wind of this season is peculiarly disagreeable in its effects upon man and beast, and is so drying that the leaves and covers of books curl, and the seams of furniture open under its influence.

April is the month of tornadoes, but occasionally one blows in May. March is, however, considered the most trying month to the constitutions of new comers, and in it the sun pours down its torrid rays directly from the zenith. The extremes of temperature throughout the year are 65 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The worst feature in the climate is its

EXTREME UNHEALTHINESS.

From the dense masses of tangled undergrowth festering under an equatorial sun; from the sluggish rivers choked with an exuberant vegetation, and from the superabundant and rapid growth, there arises constantly a deadly miasma, fatal or sickening alike to all new comers, be they black or white.

The fever resulting from this miasma is called the African or "acclimating" fever, and it attacks most persons within a few days after their arrival. "The first symptoms are languor, a lazy indifference,

headache, pains in the back, loss of appetite, and more or less gastric derangement, rapidly developing into bilious remittent fever. If this yields to mild medical treatment, the patient is prepared to endure ordinary exposure to the climate. Sometimes the disease assumes the tertiary form of intermittent fever, accompanied by bilious vomiting, a dull expression of the eye, and in the febrile paroxysms, intense headache and delirium." It is a singular fact and one worth noting, that those who remain on ship-board, although anchored only a short distance from the shore suffer less from the effects of the climate.

Mr. Darwin in his narrative of the voyage of the Beagle, mentions the same phenomenon as existing on the coast of Peru, which is scourged with a similar fever.

Rev. Mr. Wilson, a Missionary in Africa for eighteen years, referring to this climate, says: "Another great drawback to the prosperity of Liberia, is the undoubted unhealthiness of the climate. The process of acclimation must be passed through even by colored persons, and for the first six months it is quite as trying to them as to the whites."* As is well known the colored emigrant who goes out under the superintendence, or by the aid of, the American Colonization Society is, on arrival, taken in charge by their agents and remains under their care for six months, during which period he is supposed to be acclimated or dies of the fever. If, happily, he survives and is without capital, or a snug sum laid up for a rainy day, he goes out into the community enfeebled by the fever and liable to a relapse or other complication caused by it, to fight for his life and fortune in competition with the abundant Americo-African and aboriginal labor. With the latter he is at a great disadvantage, owing to his greater physical and social needs.

"The Colonization Society's six months' allowance is in many cases just sufficient to escort one who is really dependent on it to the verge of trouble or to the door of starvation. When the Society drops you, it is 'root pig or die,' and a poor sickly pig finds 'Jordan is a hard road to travel.' The land is able and willing to yield ample supplies in return for labor, but the winds are not able to support you until the products of the land mature."†

*Wilson's "Western Africa."

†James Churchwill Vaughan. Liberian correspondent.

As regards the physical ability of the different races to withstand the miasmatic influence of the climate, it is established:

First.—That the aboriginal inhabitant is not particularly affected by it. He is born in it, reared in it, and saturated by it. Of the probability of atmospheric poison saturation, which renders the system poison proof, while subjected to its continuous influence, we have evidence at our own doors.

Second.—That the white man, sooner or later, succumbs to its deadly influence. An intermittent residence will prolong his life; a continuous sojourn will end it in a few years. "The climate, both on the coast (of Liberia) and in the interior, is fatal to Europeans, and dangerous even for the blacks born in the temperate zone, but not unfavorable to the indigenous population."*

Third.—That the foreign black man *may* be acclimated; the white scarcely ever; at the same time it is signally true that it attacks the former, and is fatal to him in very many instances. To the mulatto, there is reason to believe it is more fatal than to the pure blooded negro. Both white and black have to pass through the same process of acclimation. On this point, Rev. Mr. Wilson says: "For the *colored man from these United States is as sure to feel the effects of the climate as the white man;* and if the physical constitution of the former possesses some advantage in adapting itself more readily to the climate, I am not sure but the other will have equally as much advantage in his superior discretion and the precautionary measures which he will practice to preserve his health."†

Other and more recent authorities assert, that there is no sensible difference in the effects of the climate upon the white, the mulatto, and the foreign black man.

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*Stanford's Compendium; edited by Keith Johnston, Chief of Royal Geographical Society's Expedition.

†Wilson's "Western Africa," fol. 511.

THE EVIDENCE OF FACTS.

If any evidence of these facts is desired, it is only necessary to refer to the long roll of noble martyrs, both white and black, who have given their lives to this cause from its inception to the present moment. Among these devoted men were Mills, Bacon, Gordon, Dix, Seaton, Ashman, Cary, Randall, Anderson, Humphries and Skinner, all of whom either died at their posts or came with constitutions impaired, home to die. The records of the American Colonization Society show that up to as early a date as 1859 they had sent out 10,000 emigrants at an expense of $1,800,000, of whom only one-half were then residents. Of 149 emigrants sent to Liberia in 1851 on the bark Morgan Dix, thirty-seven died before the close of 1852. Of eighty-eight emigrants sent out to Sierra Leone in 1820, under three agents, twenty of them died before the expiration of the year, together with the three agents.

Of the dreadful mortality attending this coast fever, Mr. Adams gives the following instances: "On a voyage to Lagos, a town on the coast near the delta of the Niger, and Benin, a town on the river, out of a crew of fifty-five persons, thirty-five died. On another voyage to Benin, with a crew of twenty men, ten died in four weeks."* I have taken these accounts at random, as they happen to be at hand. If it is objected that they are out of date it may be answered that the conditions are still unchanged and the results would be the same to-day.

To take a more recent illustration: the bark Azor sailed from Charleston, S. C., in the spring of 1878, with 256 negro emigrants. It is but fair to state that the ship was over-crowded and not properly fitted for the passenger traffic. Twenty-three of these emigrants died on the passage, twenty-seven have since died in Liberia and sixteen had returned up to a date not very late.

*Adams' "Remarks." folio 206.

A family of ten persons, from Burke county, Ga., was on her passenger list. The father and two members of it died on the ship, and two more on arrival at Monrovia. The remaining five have returned to their old home in Burke county, by the assistance of friends, white and black. Others who went from the same county have appealed to the charity of their friends there, and the money has been sent them to return.

A returned Liberian, in a communication addressed to the Baltimore *American*, says, in reply to an editorial entitled "Liberia No Paradise," and a letter from William Coppinger, secretary of the American Colonization Society:—"I don't propose to contradict the statements of either. In fact I cannot, for as far as they go they are true; but neither tells all nor dwells upon the main thing connected with Liberia—the awful unhealthiness of the climate and the great sufferings all emigrants have to endure there. I went to Liberia in 1847 with a party of over twenty from Baltimore, and I do not believe there are over two of that party now living in Liberia. Myself and one other came back to Baltimore after the war. Everybody who goes out there is attacked with a severe fever within twenty days. More or less die in the first attack, but the second, sure to follow, is still more fatal. Some have it lightly, and get about and only suffer from chill and fever afterward, while the greater part enjoy nothing like health for years, if ever. I was one of five children, making seven in all, including father and mother. Father died at once in the first attack, mother within a year, leaving us all young children orphans. Our case was not singular. The same or about the same occurs to emigrants from every vessel; in fact a great majority of the emigrants are poor and helpless, and their sufferings are greater than I can describe. I have known nearly half of the emigrants by a vessel to die within a year, and I could name many families, most of whom are dead, but the mention of names would be of no use, as they are unknown. But take the families that are known. Say the Roberts family—mother and daughter, the President, the Bishop, the Doctor and one other—all dead. The McGill family from Baltimore—man, wife, daughter and five sons—all gone. The Tragis family—all dead. The Paines—two only surviving. Of the five Presidents two only are alive. Then of the more prominent men

Bishop Burns, Governor Russum, Henry Dennis, the Drs. Moore (father and son), the great sugar planter Richardson, Augustus Washington and a host of others well known—all gone. Had Liberia possessed a tolerable climate I should never have left it, and yet I did not leave it merely to save life, my own life; but that life was rendered miserable by witnessing the sufferings of others from that baleful climate. I say nothing about anything else. This fatal bar to emigration and successful growth is enough to deter all who know from attempting it, and for this end solely do I offer this brief, truthful sketch.

The evidence of the unhealthiness of the climate is extremely abundant, and the only difficulty is in making a judicious selection. Unsupported opinions on such a subject are, however, of little value, and I make a final quotation from document No. 273 of the Legation of the United States, dated at Monrovia, Liberia, September 3, 1877:—

"These agents speak the truth when they represent that the emigrants will find the soil fertile; that constant summer prevails; that there are mineral wealth, beautiful landscapes, luxurious vegetation, tropical fruits of every description, &c. But they should add that the most primitive agricultural appliances are used for tilling this most fertile soil, such as cutlasses, hoes, bill hooks, &c. Such a thing as a plough is not to be found in use in Liberia.* It has been demonstrated that neither horses nor mules can withstand the climate on the sea coast. Horses are found in the interior, but when brought to the coast they sicken and die. Although constant summer prevails, as to temperature, the miasmatic influence caused by heavy rains alternating with the hot sunshine causes sickness during six months of the year, and during the remaining six months the power of the sun is such that it is almost impossible for any one except a native to work, as it produces inertia, lassitude, want of energy. Indeed after a man has once had the fever he never, in Africa, regains the energy he was possessed of before."

*To be absolutely truthful, it is proper to state, that since the above date, one plough has been put into use at Cape Palmas.

FALSE IMPRESSIONS OF AFRICA.

So much has been written about the unhealthiness of African climates, the belief is well nigh general that the whole of Africa is to Europeans a vast charnel house. A moment's reflection is only necessary to satisfy the inquirer that a continent occupying seventy degrees of latitude more or less, must necessarily possess a variety of soils, vegetation and climates. Cape Messurado in Liberia, where its capital Monrovia is located, and Sierra Leone, are supposed to be more unhealthy than the country generally. "I do not remember to have heard a dissent from this opinion by a single individual whose judgment was entitled to respect; and yet it is from statistics of sickness and mortality occurring at these two places chiefly, that the public, both in England and America, have derived their impressions of the unhealthiness of the country at large."* In view of the great loss of valuable lives that both countries have suffered on this part of the West coast, this impression, or belief, is not unreasonable. Every year is however adding to our knowledge of the geography and climatology of this vast region.

Among the recent additions to the literature of this subject is a paper read at the Royal Geographical Society's meeting on November 22, 1880, by Sir Bartle Frere, late Governor of the Cape Colony, on the "Temperate Region of South Africa." The Ex-Governor says that the Northern boundary of this region is a line drawn from Cape Frio in Latitude 18° South, on the Atlantic, or West Coast, to St. Lucia Bay Latitude 29° South on the Indian or East Coast. This imaginary line runs from East to West in a Southeasterly direction across the continent, and is about (1500) fifteen hundred miles in length, or the distance from London to Athens, in Greece. The Eastern boundary, running from Cape Frio to Capetown is in a

*Wilson's "Western Africa" fol. 512.

straight line, (1100) eleven hundred miles in length, or the distance from London to Gibraltar; the Western boundary running from St. Lucia Bay to Cape town is (700) seven hundred miles in length or the distance of Vienna from London. The region within these boundaries measures about 1,190,000 square miles, or one third the area of Europe, and six times that of France. "Within almost the whole of the tract thus bounded, the climate and general conditions of human life, are such as suit men of European Race, they thrive and multiply in the manner exemplified in the history of the Dutch and English speaking population of the Cape Colony." "North and East of the lines defined, a malarial fever is met with in all low lying localities." "Such fever if not unknown South and West of the line indicated, at any rate does not interfere with the ordinary condition of healthy existence for men of European stock."

Within this region are the following Colonies or States:

Cape Colony, proper.
Basuto land.
Kaffraria, Griqualand East, and Pondoland.
Natal.
Transvaal.
Orange Free State.
Griqualand West.
Disputed territory.

Occupying an area of 430,903 square miles, and containing a population of natives and Europeans, estimated at 1,866,987.

In the same region are also the countries of

Zululand.
Tongas.
Swazis.

With an area of 108,800 square miles and a population of 310,000. All these Countries, Provinces and Colonies, are within the area habitable by Europeans and Colonists.

In the same paper Sir Bartle Frere gives a list of all the Missionary stations in the district occupied in spreading the Gospel and increasing our geographical knowledge. He gives the total number of stations as eighty-four, with more than that number of out stations, employing four hundred European teachers.

It is suggested that in the interior of Liberia, away from the coasts and rivers, a healthier climate may be found. Owing to the inaccessibility of the interior for the purposes of habitation and agriculture, the entire absence of roads or other means of inter-communication excepting foot paths, any opinion on this subject must be founded on conjecture.

PRODUCTIONS AND RESOURCES OF LIBERIA.

The fertility of the soil, the abundance of natural products to be obtained without labour, the ease with which the land can be made to pour out all the treasures of a tropical and even of a temperate climate, have not been exaggerated. The country is ready and willing to yield "corn, wine and oil" in full measure without ceasing. Coffee and cotton and hundreds of other productions of which other nations have a virtual monopoly, can be easily raised. But we find a great difference between the actual and possible productions of Liberia. Although a rice growing land, it is not planted to any extent, as the Liberian prefers to husband the natural products of the soil which grow without labor or risk; it is however the principal breadstuff, and commands in Sourthern Liberia $3.60 per bushel, in Northern Liberia $1.40 per bushel. For this necessary, Liberia prefers to depend on foreign countries, and the surplus product of aboriginal laborers. Notwithstanding some natural drawbacks in its cultivation, such as the destructive character of the birds, it is stated on official authority, that Liberian rice is of better quality than the foreign, and that it can be grown and sold at a price much less. Among the vegetables adapted or indigenous to the climate are beans, corn, the potato and the cassada, the latter is a plant more valuable than the yam or sweet potato, and requires nine months to mature; the potato requiring four to six months.

It is now sixty-five years since that nature's nobleman Paul Cuffee, conducted the first emigrants to Liberia's shores and thirty-three years from the organization of the Republic, and the exports still continue to be palm oil, camwood, and inferior ivory, of which palm oil is the chief. "The total value of the exports from Western Africa to Great Britain in 1878 was £1,213,270, two-thirds of the exports being palm oil." "There are no statistics regarding the extent of the commercial relations of the republic of Liberia with the United Kingdom;

the annual statement of trade and navigation issued by the Board of Trade not mentioning Liberia, but only the Western coast of Africa. By that statement it appears that the annual exports from 1874 to 1878 have declined from £1,824,367 in 1874 to £1,213,270 in 1878, and the imports into Western Africa have increased from £761,932 in 1874 to £1,038,971 in 1878."*

A natural bar to the great commercial importance of Liberia, is her deficiency in harbors, and the absence of rivers navigable for over twenty miles from the coast. Her shores, excepting in the South East, are low, sandy, and swept by the surf.

The dislike of the negro to labor is obvious in Liberia. There is no fire in his bones impelling him to labor. There is no impulse in his climate or surroundings, no sufficient need, no inherited habits, no illustrations before his eyes. If his physical wants are supplied he is perfectly satisfied to do absolutely nothing, and hence "the want of disposition to cultivate the soil is, perhaps, the most discouraging feature in the prospects of Liberia," and the cause of its continued dependence on other countries for the necessaries and comforts of life. The tendency or drift of labor is toward the centres of population on account of the increased opportunities they afford for social intercourse in the way of religious and society meetings, for petty trading and the pursuit of politics. The shovel and the hoe are abandoned when it is possible, and the result is seen in the absence of roads, the inaccessibility of the interior, the poverty in agricultural implements adapted to advanced culture, the stagnation, if not fatal decadence, of agriculture, the occasional public disorder and the bankruptcy of the government.

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* Statesman's Year Book: 1880.

FALSE REPRESENTATIONS OF LIBERIA.

Among the false representations which have been made to the ignorant Southern field hand, is the plenitude of horses and mules. We have seen that they do not exist. Labor is represented as abundant when there is no demand for it. A carpenter or blacksmith who depended on plying his trade as a means of support would starve. The common field hand, who is in the majority among the emigrants, comes into direct competition with the aborigines, who work for (25) twenty-five cents per day, not paid in money, but in calico at twenty-five cents per yard, or in tobacco. At $1.50 per week his fortune will not accumulate rapidly.

Land is given to the laborer in the interior, but it frequently is so inaccessible as to be valueless for any purpose except bare subsistence. The Georgia family before referred to, report that the land allotted to them was twenty-five miles from Monrovia, and the only access to it was by a footpath.* And what is he to do with it, without capital, or the means of cultivation except his own hands? or means of living until the crops mature?

Farming in Liberia is at best a very tedious and slow process; the very luxuriance of vegetation being a drawback to the growth and culture of crops. Without beasts of burden to work the crops, the extent of land in the power of one man to cultivate is four acres; the

There are no roads, save the narrow, overgrown footpaths, which are only wide enough for a single person to walk in, and as tortuous as the way of a serpent. These paths lie through the territory of numerous small tribes, full of envy, jealousy, and hate toward each other; so the traveler who is able to pass one will find it hard to get through the next, which perhaps is only ten miles further on. Add to these, the fact that provisions are, as a rule, extremely scarce among these small tribes, and not to be had for love or money, and you will be ready to form some idea of the difficulty of reaching interior Africa from the Liberian coast.—"Our Mission Work in Africa:" by Rt. Rev. Charles Clifton Penick, D. D.: February*, 1881.

profit on an acre of coffee, after allowing four years for the maturity of the trees, is estimated at $30, giving the farmer, after waiting four years for his trees to grow, an income of $120 a year ! The few beasts of burden are small oxen, but the greater part of the transportation is done by the aboriginal inhabitants of the soil. Among the innumerable insects which swarm in equatorial climes is that torment of thin-skined animals, the tsetse, sometimes called the "spear" or " little sword" fly. Its long, sharp proboscis will draw blood through a canvas hammock. This fly, by its continued torments, will finally exhaust the strength of horses and mules. Swine are said not to thrive well, but poultry is plentiful.

The immigrant from the United States without abundant means at his command is deprived of his accustomed food.

If he could be sure of a bowl of rice and palm oil every day, he would indeed be fortunate. Bacon, his favorite food, ham, flour, and other provisions, excepting, perhaps, poultry, are extraordinarily high. A resident government official says; "I have never seen flour of a less price than fourteen dollars per barrel, butter one dollar per pound, hams from five to eight dollars each ; " * bacon can be had at twenty-five cents a pound, brogans at $2.50 to $5.00 per pair, common prints or calico, twenty-five cents per yard.

The Georgian emigrants' report, and their evidence is corroborated by the best authority in Liberian matters, that it is folly for the emigrant to rely on the hope of meeting friends there, upon whom he can depend in his misfortune: there, perhaps, more than here, they come with money, and go with it; and the emigrant who lands depending on the small accumulation of his scanty earnings, is, unless remarkably provident, soon " washed up."

With the greatest desire to make the picture as bright as possible, the fact will still remain that the masses or the majority of emigrants from this country are very poor when they land, and, with very few exceptions, get poorer in a continued residence. And, finally, the emigrant to Liberia from the United States gives up educational, religious, moral, social and physical advantages, which he cannot live to see reproduced in the country of his adoption.

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*Document of the Legation of the United States.

THE POPULATION AND ITS CHARACTER.

In 1830, eight years after the settlement of Liberia, its population, exclusive of aborigines, was 1,500. In 1847, the date of the organization of the Republic, the Americo-African population was 5,000, and the number of aborigines occupying their territory 100,000. In 1856, nine years after, the Americo-Africans numbered 8,000 and the aborigines 250,000. The population of Monrovia at this date was 1,500; of Sinou, 1,000; of Cape Palmas, 1,000. In 1873, twenty-six years after the organization of the Republic, the Americo-African population was 20,000; the aborigines numbering 700,000, including the two large, powerful and semi-hostile tribes of Mandengas and Grebos, the former nearly all Mohammedans, and among the most intelligent, enterprising and influential of all the West African tribes; "many of them can read and write Arabic with ease and elegance."

Three years later, in 1876, these two tribes were in a state of insurrection against the Liberian government, which insurrection, however, was finally subdued. In 1878 the Americo-Liberians numbered 19,000; the aborigines 701,000, the town of Monrovia having an estimated population of 13,000. We discover from these statistics, imperfect as they necessarily are, the apparent centralization of the population in the larger towns, as has already been observed, and shown by the fact that the town of Monrovia which, in the year 1856, contained less than one-fifth of the entire Americo-African population, in 1878 contained but little less than two-thirds of that population.

The leading tribes among the forty more or less comprising the aboriginal population of Liberia are the Mandengas and Grebos already mentioned; the Veis, who are inventors of an alphabet for writing their own language, and who are fast being converted to

Mohammedanism under the influence of the Mandengas; the Basas,* Bardines, Pessehs and the Krus, who are the sailors of the coast.

Among these tribes slavery is established, and involuntary servitude exists. There has also grown up much to the alarm of the friends of Liberia, a system of apprenticeship; by which the members of the inferior tribes are bound to the service of the Liberians for a term of years.

We then find in Liberia, whose very name breathes of freedom, the remarkable anomaly of a republic, founded by Christian philantrophists, in the interests of, and as an asylum for, an oppressed and enslaved race, and whose government is conducted exclusively by that race, encouraging and abetting the great evil of domestic slavery and involuntary servitude within its own borders, and by the inefficiency of its government powerless to prevent it. Upon this point Dr. E. W. Blyden, the very able and accomplished president of Liberia College at Monrovia, says :—"Domestic slavery exists. It is difficult and impossible for the Liberian government to interfere."†

As has already been observed, the most powerful and intelligent of these tribes is the Mandenga. It is the only one having a written form of law and exercises a great influence upon its fellows.

The relation therefore of these independent tribes under the lead of the Mandengas, to the Liberian government is extremely weak. They manage their own affairs in their own way, the authority of the government only arising from the agreement of these tribes not to make war or carry on the slave trade.

The preponderance of this great aboriginal population in the Republic is a source of great political and moral danger, which the space allowed me will not permit us to discuss. It will suffice to say that the influence of such a mass of barbarism and superstition within the confines of Liberia upon the majority of the Americo-Africans just emerging from barbarism themselves must be extremely weakening; "while no doubt there are among them many individuals of sufficient intelligence and force to sustain themselves anywhere." the majority must be sensibly and disadvantageously impressed by it.

*The authority for the orthography of these tribal names, is A. H. Keane in Stanford's Compendium.

†Methodist Quarterly Review, July, 1872.

THE FINANCIAL CONDITION.

The financial credit of a government or people is a sure indicator of its permanent or temporary condition, and the statement is rather disparaging to Liberia that in 1871 $500,000 was borrowed in London for "internal improvements," which, after deducting two years' interest paid in advance, agents' commissions, &c., &c., netted to Liberia $200,000 in gold and useless goods, which soon disappeared without an internal improvement!" "Her inability to pay either principal or interest is now apparent, and unfortunately she lies at the mercy of her bondholders."*

The rate of interest nominated in the bond is seven per cent, the principal to be paid in fifteen years. How discouraging the prospect of payment is may be seen from the fact that "the public revenue in the years 1875 to 1878 was estimated to have amounted annually to $85,000 in paper currency, equal to about £12,000, and the expenditure to $120,000, or £17,000,"† showing the annual excess of expenses for the general administration of the government over the income to be 41 per cent.

The Hon. W. H. Roe, Secretary of the Treasury, in his annual report on the finances of Liberia to the House of Representatives in December, 1880, states the receipts of the last fiscal year to be in round numbers $119,450 and the disbursements for the same period $116,000 showing a nominal surplus of three thousand dollars. If, however, we deduct the increase of the public debt made during the year by the issue of $45,000 in new paper currency, we have the following result:

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*Commodore Shufeldt's address before the American Colonization Society, January 18, 1876.

†Statesman's Year Book, 1880.

Receipts of last fiscal year,	$119,451,68	
Deducting issue of Currency for same year,	45,000.00	
Net Receipts,		$74,451,68
Disbursements for same period,	$115,969,28	
Deducting Net Receipts,	74,451.68	
Balance,		$41,517.60

This statement shows the alarming excess of expenditure over net receipts of $41,517.60 or 56 per cent.! The "*London African Times*" states that this deficit was made up by the issue of new paper currency as above seen. On the authority of the "*Monrovia Observer*" newspaper report, the President in his message delivered on the 16th of December, 1880, said: "that the recent issue of fifty thousand dollars in addition to that already in circulation, had depreciated the currency to such an extent that labor is greatly retarded and discouraged," and he thought that unless something else was substituted of more intrinsic value than paper, the advancement and prosperity, as well as the commercial and agricultural operations of the country would be most seriously damaged.

No provision has been made for the payment of the principal or interest of the bonded debt, or for the redemption of the currency; and the President contents himself by asking that measures be taken at once for the extinction of the claims held by foreigners against the Republic. What measures, in the present disastrous financial condition of the Republic can be taken with any prospect of success, is a problem upon the solution of which the President is, perhaps, necessarily reticent.

The coin chiefly used in Liberia is that of Great Britain, but accounts are kept generally in American dollars and cents.

In May last, the paper currency had reached a depreciation of twenty per cent., it is now, probably, greater.

This condition of hopeless bankruptcy is fraught with danger to the existence of the Republic. The cords which bind her to England are being drawn closer and closer, her exports go largely to England, her imports are from England, her loans are from

England, and what few favors she has to grant, or are required of her, are to English capitalists ; notably, a charter recently given to an English company for a railroad extending 200 miles back from Monrovia, the capital, and designed ultimately to connect that port with the head waters of the Niger. English influence and gunboats may at any moment settle the question of the future of Liberia.

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITION.

In our Southern States we have the curious phenomenon of a race divided against itself by reason of the shades of color occasioned by the admixture of white blood. This feeling of hostility is sometimes latent, but always powerful. As the "color line" controls the negro in any question affecting his race arising between it and the whites, its power is equally absolute in any question between the negro and mulatto. This apple of discord is transplanted on the shores of Liberia and flourishes luxuriantly. Without entering into the question of the effect of the admixture of white blood upon the mental capacity of the negro, an exceedingly interesting one, it will suffice to say that the government of Liberia has from its beginning; with few exceptions, been in the hands of the mulatto, and whatever of incapacity, of corruption, of mismanagement and disaster has followed that government, it is charged upon him by the pure blooded negro, (who outnumbers him in the proportion of nine to one), justly or unjustly, as it may be.

In addition to this difficulty is the want of harmony, to use a mild term, between the Americo-Africans and the aborigines, which, according to some correspondents, has culminated in contempt and hatred on the part of the latter. This feeling has been aggravated no doubt by the superciliousness of, and the tone of superiority assumed by, the immigrants from the United States towards their less fortunate ancestral tribes. Its origin may, however, be traced to the misunderstandings arising from the sale of lands. The traditional custom of these aboriginal tribes is to pass land by inheritance only; the transfer of land by sale is unknown and misunderstood by them, and although they may have signed deeds and conveying instruments to the American Colonization Society or to the Liberian government they have no comprehension of their force and meaning;

and these lands can only be held by a superior force against their original owners, the original agreements being entirely ignored. A secret society, a sort of free-masonry, is already formed among them, daily increasing in numbers, the ultimate design of which is to prevent further aggressions on their territory by the Liberians. Another evidence of the hostility of these tribes is the readiness they manifested only a short time since, in a boundary dispute, to side with England *en masse* against Liberia. I have already suggested the tendency toward the abandonment of agriculture for the pursuit of politics, (the government being in a state of continual political agitation,) of petty trading, or other light and less laborious, and, in the opinion of the partly educated, more dignified and "aristocratic," vocations. This drift is no doubt owing to the effect of the climate and surroundings, which causes in the Americo-African, as in the aborigines, indolence, indifference and improvidence.

Social progress in Liberia, it is perhaps unnecessary to add, is as backward as the political. From what has already been remarked the social condition may be inferred without occupying more space. The Negro has no liking for labor as labor, and when he has labored takes no satisfaction in the result because it was attained by his labor; he would prefer it as a free gift. This characteristic is a fatal bar to social progress. He has little, if any, innate social ambition. From contact with, and in imitation of a superior race he shows social ambition to some extent; but vanity, not pride, is his leading characteristic. As a race he has no love of knowledge, but is not altogether deficient in the desire for education; that desire is, however, indefinite and based on a love of display and novelty. With education, as with the objects of labor, he much prefers to have it as a gift, and will exercise little self-denial in obtaining it. The history of the Americo-African proves this. For a long period the schools and churches in Liberia were entirely supported by foreign missionary societies, and to-day there is very little, if any, interest in higher education or the support of common schools, which are inferior and irregular.*

*The schools are in a most deplorable condition; morality at a low ebb, and the people generally, oppressed with heavy taxes, are lazy and indolent.—"*Stanford's Compendium*," *edited by Keith Johnston, Chief of Royal Geographical Society's Expedition, fol.* 129.

It is extremely gratifying and encouraging to learn that the educational interests of the state have largely claimed the attention of the Department of the Interior of Liberia during the year.

The government is now taking the initiative, and claims to have established forty-three schools with forty-four teachers, attended by 1400 children. A large proportion of the children being of aboriginal parentage, and belonging to the Golahs, Veis, Basas and Grebos. Several of these schools are located in native towns.

We are then emboldened to hope for better things in the future; but thus far it cannot be denied that the result of the efforts of the friends of education in Liberia has been extremely disappointing.

A quarter of a century ago Liberia College was founded by the liberality of Christian philanthropists in Boston and elsewhere. The purpose of its founders was to provide the means to educate Negroes for the missionary work in the interior of Africa. It has so far been a failure. The government and the people have taken no interest in it, and have done nothing for the college but to make vexatious rules. The buildings, erected at a great expense, were allowed to go to ruin, and up to a recent date the government could not be induced to make an appropriation for repairs or to give the founders any encouragement. A few years after its establishment, Rev. Mr. Thomas said of it :—"I regret to say that a college has been lately established in Liberia. * * * I regret it because it will involve an outlay that might be better used in common schools. * * * The present state of society in Liberia has no demand for such a thing." *The event has justified that prophecy. The great drawback, irrespective of natural disadvantages to the Liberian is his innate or acquired dependence on others for social advantages which his own hands should have created.

*Rev. C. W. Thomas, M. A., "West Coast of Africa."

OUR PRESENT DUTY.

Archbishop Whately has said that "no community ever did or ever can emerge, unassisted by external help, from a state of utter barbarism into anything that can be called civilization."*

Physical geography has blighted Africa with the curse of barbarism. In God's providence she will be redeemed, Christianized and civilized. The giant in the way of European colonization, in the greater part of the continent is the climate; a difficulty, which, in all probability, can never be overcome. The work of evangelization then, can only be accomplished by the Negro as an humble instrument in the hands of superior races.

Liberia, to which the whole Christian world has looked for an inauguration of this great work, for evidence that the Christianized Negro is able to grapple with barbarism alone, is inert, silent and dependent. Mohammedanism, insidious and powerful, is fast swallowing up the natives of her own borders.

Thus far she has made no use of her opportunities, and has accomplished nothing which would not have been otherwise accomplished at a much diminished expenditure of valuable lives and treasure. I know it is affirmed that she has extinguished the slave trade on 600 miles of coast. How potential the Republic was in this matter could be better ascertained by inquiry of the commanders of English and American cruisers and gunboats. It may also be pertinently asked if the Republic was able to do this why is she not able to settle her differences with the aboriginal tribes unaided by American men-of-war? And why does she permit the "foul blot" of slavery within her borders?

A better day is dawning for Western Africa; and although the present moment may not be propitious, although "human sacrifices

* "Political Economy," folio 68.

continue to deepen the foul blood stains in Dahomey," "the wave of civilization which so far has only touched some small isolated portions of its shores, will ere long flow over it." *

Liberia must not be abandoned. However ill advised the establishment of a colony under such climatic obstacles was, or however discouraging its past, or its future may be. "Those who have been instrumental in establishing it, and their posterity especially, are morally bound to support and foster the unfortunate colonists whom they have sent thither under a mistaken philanthropic policy." † The Spanish have a proverb: "The wise man changes his mind, the fool never."

We shall be wise if we accept the condition imposed upon us, and do not persist in crowding upon the shores of Liberia, ship loads of poor, ignorant and improvident Negro laborers, to die or to degenerate to a state very nearly approaching their original barbarism, in the vain hope that we shall thus evangelize Africa.

Rather let us use the money generously offered by noble hearted philanthropists, in educating here in our own country, under the influence of our own institutions, negroes, foreign or domestic, physically and mentally qualified for the missionary work, and send them out, under government patronage and support, to establish, in connection with our enterpising merchants and heroic missionaries, trading posts and centres of religious influence throughout the "Dark Continent."

The editor of the *African Times* in a review of the year pertinently says: "We have never ceased to recognize the palpable fact that it is only by the agency of material means employed for the realization of material desires, that the educational element gradually, but, alas! how slowly preparing, in the British West African Settlements, can be made a powerful factor in African regeneration."‖

The Republic as fostered and cherished and looked upon as the hope of the Christian religion has narrowed our vision and contracted our powers. Liberia is a mere landing place on the great occan of Africa, a starting point at best.

*London African Times, January 1, 1881.
†New York Herald Editorial, Dec. 31, 1880.
‖London African Times, January 1, 1881.

The whole world is now turning to Africa as an object of intense and curious interest. England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria Belgium and Portugal are exploring her vast water courses, her magnificent lakes, her great mountains and mineral resources, in the interests of commerce. Geographical societies are sending their private expeditions into every quarter to add to the sum of our knowledge. Religion, the handmaid of commerce, is not behind in the race; increased activity and enterprise are apparent on either hand, and the missionary and the merchant will soon be established at the trading posts in the very heart of a continent hitherto dreaded and unknown. Will America suffer herself to be outstripped in this contest, and sit supinely watching the failure of her fond aspirations in the lost influence and character of the Liberian Republic?

(Dec., 1888, 20,000)

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